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Training Family Science Faculty in CORE COMMUNICATION

Family Science Program, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences
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Partially funded by Instructional Development Grants 2016-2017

Objectives

- Utilize CORE COMMUNICATION training to increase and expand interpersonal communication competence of Family Science majors and minors
- Increase reinforcement of CORE COMMUNICATION training across Family Studies and Child and Family Development curricula
- Examine possible translation of CORE COMMUNICATION concepts into an online format
- Assess the impact of CORE COMMUNICATION training on Family Science majors and minors across time

Aims

As a whole and regardless of major, university graduates with interpersonal competence (also defined as soft skills) are viewed as more employable (Finch, Hamilton, Baldwin, & Zehner, 2013; Robles, 2012), yet interpersonal competence is not often recognized as a part of discipline specific knowledge (Chamorro-Premuzic, Artech, Bremner, Greven, & Furnham, 2010). While important to employability in general, interpersonal competence is particularly crucial for those students in social science majors who intend to have a career serving individuals and families.

The Family Science (FS) program in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences directly addresses the need for interpersonal competence through the implementation of CORE COMMUNICATION (CC) training (Miller, 1971; Miller & Miller, 2011; Miller, Nunnally, & Wackman, 1976) in the FCS 3180 Intimate Relationships course.

CC is “a system for understanding the dynamics of communication and relationships integrated with practical talking and listening skills as well as decision- making and conflict-resolving processes, for effectively meeting the challenges of daily living,” (S. L. Miller, personal communication, March 11, 2016). Completing this training can also assist “negotiating, influencing, mediating, (and) counseling,” (Miller & Miller, 2011) at both the personal and professional levels. This training has been a part of the course since 1998 with informal student feedback noting CC as one of the main things that they remember from the course as well as the major.

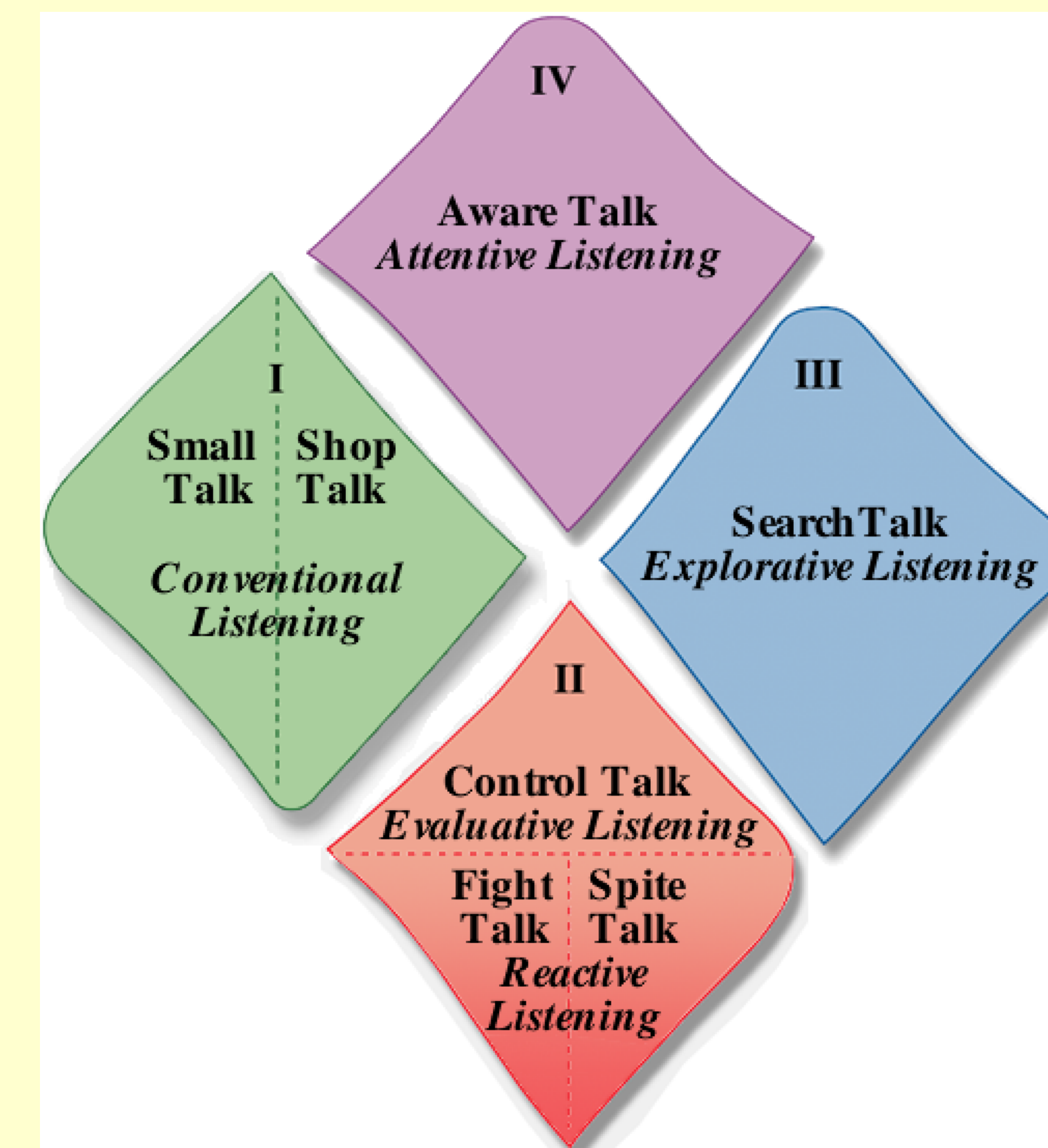
CORE COMMUNICATION Background

CC was first created at the University of Minnesota Family Center as a part of the Couples Communication program. According to Miller (personal communication, March 11, 2016), the program has not only been utilized clinically, but in the military, corporate, and academic spheres as well. While many research studies have been conducted on the Couples Communication program, and CC is in use at over 350 colleges and universities, Miller notes that no “formal” research has been done on the use of CC itself, and that “the authors are certainly open to and would encourage research on the system at Western Michigan University if there is interest,” (S. L. Miller, personal communication, March 11, 2016).

SOS networks

| S | O | S |
|----------|-----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Self | Other(s) | Stakeholders |
| Yourself | People who are immediately/centrally involved | People who are peripherally Involved and yet still affected |

Communication and Listening Style Map



Awareness Wheel

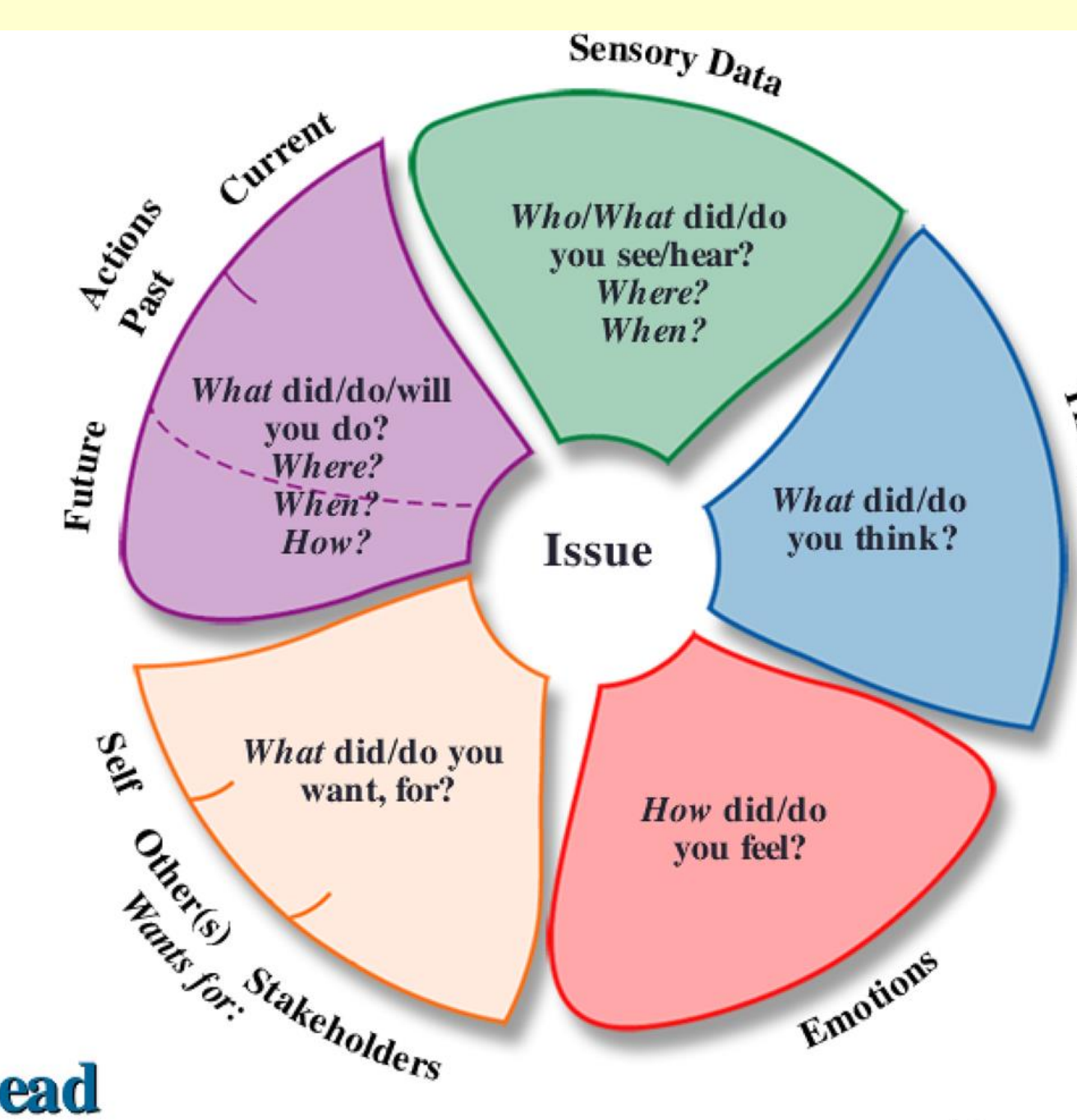
Consider:

- Who?
- What?
- Where?
- When?
- How?

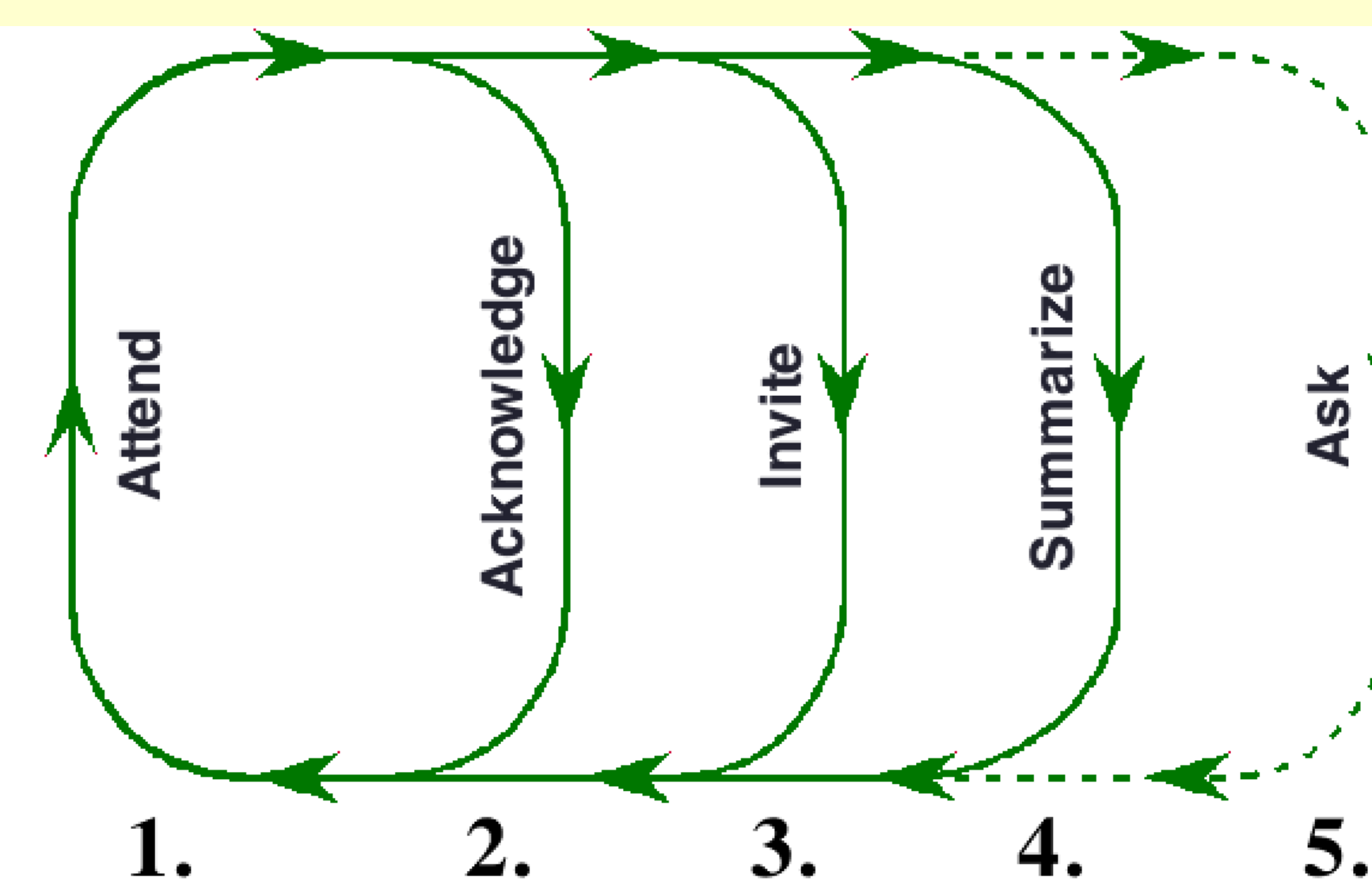
With a Zone

Avoid “Why?”

- Notice – All Questions Lead



Listening Cycle



Attentive Listening Uses Skills 1 – 4

Outcomes

Description of Accomplishments & Specific Outcomes



The CC workshop was held on October 6-7, 2016 in Kahrman Hall. Fifteen people attended including full and part-time FS faculty, the FCS department chair, and a graduate assistant: All attendees received certification to teach CC.

A satisfaction survey was sent to attendees after the workshop concluded.

- 70% of the 10 respondents were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the workshop overall
- 80% of respondents were somewhat or extremely satisfied with the presented content.
- 70% of respondents noted they were somewhat or extremely likely to use the information in their personal or professional lives.
- 40% of attendees noted that they were somewhat uncomfortable with the idea of teaching CC after the workshop.

Some FS faculty became concerned that the theoretical foundation of this curriculum was not apparent and the presented sources need to be updated. Further, during the time period of this workshop, a felt needs survey related to the need and preference for online programming within the FS majors was sent to students. The expressed preference and need for online programming exceeded expectation. In addition, Dr. Miller was hesitant to provide clear support for translating the curriculum to a viable online format. These results all led faculty to discuss the future of implementing CC curriculum in the program. The outcomes also helped faculty adjust original plans and curricula from including online with residency experience to providing 100% of FS courses within the Child and Family Development and Family Science majors *online*, which will launch in spring 2018.